Tooth Ache

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Tooth Ache

by HeartSyndicate

Summary

!!BEING REWRITTEN!! (which is why everything gets deleted and reuploaded entirely differently a few days later LMAOOO)

Will Graham was always a peculiar boy, with a father who was no better.

In his life, he had never truly believed in God, and dissuaded the fact of vampires, werewolves, mermaids, and any other mythological creature that has no proof of its life.

Though, when bodies drained of their life and mutilated corpses begin wrecking havoc on Wolf Trap, Father Crawford is on his knees for Will to use his empathy to find the one behind this mystery.

Even the most handsome faces have secrets.

Notes

I just keep tearing this work apart, but I promise!! I'll stop!!! I'm actually getting somewhere with the chapters after being on a hiatus for awhile. My dog was diagnosed with cancer, and it's been rough.

See the end of the work for more notes

Allusion

CHAPTER l

The bells were chiming on this fall day. Having been pulled by the keeper atop the big Chapel, Will admired the stained glass pictures of Jesus, and the betrayal of Judas, as he entered through the giant wooden gates of the Chapel.

He was quietly greeted by a few passerbyers who quickly curved away when they recognized who he was.

The son of the devil, they'd murmur.

Will, short for William, has lived in this forsaken town from part of his youth till now. Twenty-nine years old he turned this year, he thought bitterly. More surprised than bitter by the fact he'd lasted this long.

He and his papa moved from a quaint river village down South, up to the North, to where they resided here, the worst possible place Will mused.

This town was a tight-knit community, highly religious, and extremely superstitious. Not a good environment for newcomers, warm and welcoming was not something thrown around freely here. Especially for the ones likewise of Will and his father.

Will's father was nothing of the sorts of the people who resided in the town. He was brass, calloused from years of hard physical labor, and didn't last through even the most simple of small talks. The locals didn't take it nicely, and it had hardly taken a few weeks before rumors sprouted of his father.

His papa had a grotesque jagged scar across his lips, letting the front of his teeth lay visible to the human eye with the lack of lip tissue. It was one he acquired long before Will had even been born. Maybe even before his father even laid eyes on his mama. The possibility was large, but would never be quelled.

His father never did tell him how it came to be, and Will accepted it quietly when he sensed his father becoming tense when the question came up out of thin air.

With this scar though, when they entered the village, kids would weep in fear.

A child's mind exaggerates the picture of his fathers large build and jarring facial disfigurement into something more menacing. And so, the rumors of Will's father being a monstrous follower of Satan due to his unfortunate appearance still hung around their heads even after the poor soul' death.

The herbalists and healers of the village said it was a heart attack, the villagers thought the Devil finally came to reap his soul.

Will shook his head, walking through the building crowd to seat himself at a decrepit wooden bench, crossing his legs. The old silver cross necklace stuck inside his white blouse, one of the few things his father left behind in his possession.

His father didn't keep many things, and had no quarrel with leaving non-essential items behind on their journey. But, with this particular item, and a short list of a few others, his father preached he kept close.

He knew his father was a haunted man, and wanted to shelter Will from whatever had hurt him in the past, but Will was desperate for clarity he'd never be given due to his fathers passing.

He gripped his pants, watching as everyone sat themselves to every bench around him, except the seat by Will's side.

Will preferred it that way though, whatever was wrong with his father must've been passed down to him too. His empathy, or the gift of the devil the kids in his school house would jeer at him, allowed him to see too much.

The world buzzed around himself as if he were drunk, but fully aware, and already reached the hangover headache stage all at once.

So, to be alone he cherishes, no clouded senses, or ringing ears.

He watched as the priest finally entered up onto the stage from behind a dark maroon curtain. Father Crawford, a dark skinned man with an ill shaped goatee under his lip that's giving signs of graying, was big, and stood out amongst the crowd in his flowing whites.

"My people," he began, "I gather you all here today in prayers and thanks for the feast that is coming up!" The feast, Will began in his head, the harvest, why he'd almost forgotten. These town people praised their harvest, a time in which God blesses them with food before the dire winter.

Will didn't understand it, and never would. Many men worked long hard days in the fields they plowed to even attempt to get the crops to grow and flourish, God had no hand in what food was presented to them daily.

Will squinted his eyes, adjusting his spectacles as he caught Father Crawford's gaze between themselves before looking away at his chin. Something was bothering Father Crawford, he could by the twitch of his powerful jaw.

"And so, please, leave your blessings for a most bountiful harvest this year, as we wouldn't want to have bad luck or trouble on our tails," Father Crawford hesitated, "I have never felt so blessed, other than to be the one you bring you God's word, as you are my people, my friends, and my love." Father Crawford turns his gaze towards his wife, Bella, who sat in the front row of the benches.

Will couldn't see her face, but assumed she had a soft smile playing on her lips. You didn't have to be an empath to see their adoration for one another.

Father Crawford turned back to the mass, and gave a toothy smile. Will saw how it faltered.

“And so, before we continue on, let us do our daily mass prayer.”

…….

After mass ended, Will waited patiently for the crowds to disperse. He stayed seated, though could feel an intense gaze lingering upon him.

He waited as the Chapel grew empty, and he could hear the heavy steps of Father Crawford. Will turned his head, bowing it in respect.

“Father Crawford,” he spoke.

“William,” Father Crawford responded, before seating himself at Will’s side on the rickety bench.

The bench leaned backwards, and he could see Father Crawford's eyebrows furrow. Seems like they’d be getting a new bench soon then. Though, Will didn’t understand if he was the problem recently, perhaps a misstep in his demeanor, due to the amountful bouts of attention he was getting today.

Especially from someone as respected and ‘above’ the others as Father Crawford seemed to be.

Father Crawford sat tall, his posture straight, and Will could tell he was a proud man about to stoop to low levels. If those low levels are, well, interacting with Will.

“William, I’m glad to have seen you at mass today,” Father Crawford inclined his head towards Will.

“It was my pleasure, Father Crawford. I as well as the others can’t miss it,” Will gave Father Crawford a strained smile, in which Father Crawford's face hardened, his large hands grasped together tightly.

“Will, I’ve been meaning to stop you for some time now, but you’re the elusive type,” Father Crawfords chuckle was low, and not as humorous as he had hoped to intend it to be.

Will raised an eyebrow, “What is this about, Father Crawford? I must be getting home to my dogs, as winter will be here soon after the falling of the leaves, and I must be chopping wood for warmth. We mustn’t beat around the bush, sir.”

Father Crawford let out a low sigh, as if he strained to push the air out of his lungs.

“Will, I need your help,” he asked.

Now this piqued Will’s curiosity, and he moved his gaze from Father Crawfords chin to his nose to better imitate eye contact.

“And what help do you need, sir?”

Father Crawford’s gaze tried to catch Will’s but he was unsuccessful, Will knew what he was doing. A manipulative man, wasn’t he?

“There’s been an.. accident, up the mountain side towards the neighboring village. I am afraid that this event may repeat here sooner than later, and I believe you could help stop it,” Father Crawford's voice left no room for argument, and Will felt his anger flare over the curiosity.

He was not going to just drop his daily activities like a dog to help people who’ve never even batted an eye towards a small crying beaten Will in the streets. Father Crawford was officially crazy.

“Stop what, sir? Wouldn’t you have announced it today if it was truly so bad?” Will inquired, though his upset tone leaked through his words.

Father Crawford frowned, “William, I know we do not interact often, but please control your anger before I say what I must. I am not asking to use you for my benefit, if that is what you believe,” he took a calming breath, “I did not announce it today to scare the masses, you know how hysterical they may grow if they find something to fear.”

Will bit his lip, holding back any sort of ill-feeling towards Father Crawford and listened, “Father Crawford, what would… what would they fear?”

Father Crawfords brows furrowed again, turning his face from Will towards the empty Chapel.

“William, I believe the devil is coming to Wolftrap.”

Greetings

Chapter Summary

Will meets the mysterious and foreboding Hannibal Lecter while visiting a friend. What is so questionable about this man?

Chapter Notes

Howdy, this chapter is still a bit iffy with me.

CHAPTER ll

After the talk with Father Crawford, Will had burst through the door of the Chapel.

He must be crazy? He must be! The devil?

Will was not the superstitious type, and he hadn't taken Father Crawford to be the type to worry for something like this either. Yet, it can be expected can't it? It certainly is his 'heavenly' duty to protect this town.

But, why would he think these tragedy's would come here?

Father Crawford informed Will of a gruesome string of murders moving up the river towards Wolftrap, but who was to say it was the devil?

Will had never seen the aftermath of these homicides in person, not a single body, but he refused to believe the rumors that the bodies were drained of all the liquid in their bodies.

It is scientifically impossible, unless the people have thought the chupacabra has made a return.

Will understood how the hysteria of masses worked, and how tales will be stretched long and thin before someone speaks the truth.

'The victims' throats torn, faces always etched in a calm peace instead of the terror that should be placed there instead.' By quote of Father Crawford.

It was blasphemy.

The stories must merely be an inexperienced individual coming upon a murder victim, and their fear distorts what they truly saw. Will also felt offended that Father Crawford wanted to use his ‘gift’ to investigate, maybe even predict these murders before they happened.

If they would happen, as Father Crawford had no proof the perpetrator would truly make it to Wolftrap before being apprehended. Especially with winter coming fast after fall, who’s to say an individual could travel that far in harsh weather?

This was still not how Will’s mind worked, and it hurt him to think that they thought him as some crazy medium to see their poor futures.

Curse them, he thought.

He passed quickly by Miss Alana Bloom, who turned towards him in concern at his obvious anger. Her dark hair was pulled up hidden inside her kapp, her long dress a deep red with frilled sleeves. Her skin always had the resemblance of moonlight, pale and milky, and her eyes a sky blue.

Now was not the time to stare at beauties. Will scolded himself mentally for it.

He ignored her calling of his name, and burst down the bustling village streets. Though felt a tad bit guilty, as Alana Bloom was nothing but polite and kind towards Will in their small interactions.

Everyone was preparing for the ‘feast,’ which could also just be called a festival he assumed.

The street corners were alive with chatter, and children ran between the stalls with their wild pets. He noticed a crowd beginning to attempt to nonchalantly hover by the small local inn.

The inn was run by one of the few who tolerated Will here, Beverly Katz. They seemed to find silent solace in each other, as they were both constituted as outcasts.

Beverly had also been an outsider, but had been in this town since she was merely a toddler unlike Will.

Beverly recently had begun to dig herself out of the hole of being an outcast with the passing of her father, and taking over the inn. Though, she still remained a dear friend to Will.

Many avoided her before, but with being forced to interact with her for rooms and food at the pub of the lower part, they began to take quite the liking to her.

Will smiled at the thought. It was a small place, the hinges of the doors due to be replaced, the windows needed a good scrub, but otherwise it was a homey inn.

Maybe during the summer when he has plenty of freetime, he’ll help her do a scrupulous cleaning there.

He approached like the rest of the inhabitants of the village and attempted to get a sneak of what was happening. He pushed through the crowd, which was easy as many already avoided him, so they cleared a slight way.

He entered through the wooden door, and was greeted by Beverly's exhausted face. Her eyes brightened once she saw who entered, and quickly waved him over.

"Will! Will! I have much to tell you!" She said excitedly. He quickly approached, offering his ear to the girl.

"I have been waiting all day for you to stop by, you must hear this," she whispered as if she was suddenly trying to be secretive, "a foreigner is staying here, you see? He was ah– uh, tall, some sort of high Count. Very polite."

Will nodded, and furrowed his eyebrows. What would a Count be doing so far North? It was mostly river, creek, and forest here, no place for a rich man.

"Interesting, did you happen to catch his name?"
Beverly nodded, "Hannibal. Isn't that fascinating? Why we never have the exotic here, and it would be a delight to get a hearty tip for good service." She winked, making Will softly laugh. He shook his head, "that must be why there's an unsuccessfully inconspicuous crowd outside?"

She nodded in reply, organizing a few things on her wooden counter. She must be feeling insecure about the slightly unruly state of her inn when someone so high class is around.

"They saw him come by in quite the fancy carriage, it's with the horses outside by the back. Mighty fine breed they are too, I'd say you'd ought to see them but he might catch ya."

Will smiled, shaking his head as in no, "I think I'll live without seeing a few fancy man's horses."

Will enjoyed his few more moments of glee before reality came slipping back, and he sighed heavily leaning on the counter. Beverly perked up, turning to him, she was the only person who really listened to Will.

"What's bothering you, Willy? Other than Mr. Fine Stead, business is slow like usual. And if they do come, they can wait! What's on your mind?"

Will looked up at her, landing his eyes on her left eyebrow, pitch black like her long pin straight hair.

"Father Crawford had tried to enlist me to help today, he-," Will leaned closer to Beverly and spoke in a hushed tone, "-he said the devil was coming to Wolftrap."

Beverly tilted her head at this, she must feel the same way as Will, "the devil? He must have gone mad then, because we've had no trouble lately and I ought to think we won't have any in the future either."

Will bobbed his head along in agreeance, tucking some of his wild brown curls away from his eyes. "I must agree with you, he seems to have just been frightened by some recent events, I'm sure he'll get over it right quick."

He watched as Beverly pulled something from her apron, offering it to Will, “Well, if Father Crawford is to be right and not just a mad priest,” she chuckled, “take this, I insist.”

Will opened his right hand, and she dropped the item onto his palm. It was a small embroidered cross, blue and yellow beads strung across it hand sewn.

“What is it for, though?” He asked.

She leaned on the counter, looking past him, “my father told me to give it to someone I care for in a time of need, whether this keeps Satan himself away from you, or a crazy squirrel, you never know, that it will keep you safe.”

Will let out a chuckle at the squirrel part, and patted Beverly’s arm.

“I’ll be just alright, Bev, don’t you worry,” he could feel that she wasn’t worried, and he was glad. He wouldn’t know what to do with himself if she was truly scared. Receiving that sort of care was foreign to him, and assumed it was best to stay that way.

At least he’d be able to tell if her view on it changed.

He slipped the cross inside the breast pocket of his light jacket, tipping his head towards Beverly. “Well, still, thank you. I best be on my way home to prepare for the coming winter, please tell me of your ‘posh’ guest after he departs,” Will said, walking backwards towards the door.

Beverly smiled one last time, waving him off with a goodbye as he turned towards the doorway. Though, he saw her face turn into surprise as he felt his side collide with a very real, hard body against his side.

He quickly whipped around, turning towards the individual he must have walked into. The man was tall, with pristine ashy hair that began to gray in small strips above his brow. His skin was pale, and his cheekbones were jagged, his face made of only harsh lines. The dim lighting of the inn’s lanterns casted ill shadows across his visage.

Will glimpsed into his eyes by accident, and saw nothing. They were dark, no color in reflection, and no emotion he could read. A soulless maroon merely stared back.

It was not unlike staring into a deep, pitch black pit bare of emotions. He felt himself to instinctively sweat, his fight or flight alarm buzzing.

“I’m sorry,” Will muttered out, not letting his gaze slip from the man’s.

The man’s eyes widened, his face coming alive with hidden emotion, and slowly by the twitch of his lip spoke, “it’s quite alright, young man. It should be my apology.”

Will felt the man’s gaze linger on his face, it was as if he was searching for something. Yet, he couldn’t find it. Will gave an uneven, apologetic smile, “really, I’m sorry sir.” Will finally tore himself away from the strangers eyes and took in his fine silk clothing, his shoes a dark leather which were freshly polished.

This must be the rich man Beverly spoke of. The man tipped his head towards Will, a grin that didn't reach his eyes broke onto his face.

"Please, do not worry about such. Though, may I have your name?" The stranger asked.

Will's gut didn't want to give him his name, the man was strange, and made him feel uneasy with the way his eyes swept over him as if he was up for appraisal. Yet, he was just a traveler, and would be on his way soon. He would certainly forget Will after a week, would it be so bad to give him his name?

He turned back to look at Beverly and she had a pleading look on her face, this must be to get her 'large tip' for polite service, he internally groaned and etched a harsh smile onto his expression.

"William Graham, but I insist, call me Will."

The man's eyes seemed to glisten suddenly, sweet recognition flooding into his eyes, Will could see the amusement. He must have heard the rumors that float from lip to lip while asking for directions from the townsfolk, as they've never met before, or so that's what Will believed himself.

At least this man wasn't as completely soulless as he first assumed when greeting him.

"William, a beautiful name. I am Count Hannibal Lecter, but you may call me Hannibal if you'd please," Hannibal, as he was named, dipped his head towards Will trying to catch his eye.

Will's gaze skittered from Hannibal's face to the door.

He uneasily tipped his weight from one foot to the other. "Well," Will began, "Mr. Lecter, it was a pleasure to make your acquaintance, but I was just on my way out." Hannibal hummed, and Will could see disappointment flicker across Hannibal's features.

"Very well then, I'd hope to see you around soon, William." Will awkwardly nodded, moving to the door before taking a glance back at Hannibal, who shamelessly returned the stare with a smile playing on his face.

Will frowned and hurriedly stepped out the threshold.

The Feast

Chapter Summary

Will is seeing the beginning signs of destruction.

Chapter Notes

I don’t like how this fic is being written out, but I must bare it!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

CHAPTER lll

Will’s gut was still wrenching even as he entered his home deep in the burrowed woods, that man he met in Beverly’s Inn was… wrong.

Something was not right, but it was as if what was off-set was clear. Invisible to Will’s eyes. Will felt like a bird repeatedly slamming into a glass window, bashing his head, feeling that something is blocking his senses but so clear it deviates his eyes.

He rubbed a sweaty hand against his face, feeling his scruff pull against his skin. Maybe he should shave….. later.

Later it is then.

He heard his best friend, and pet, Winston, whining at his feet. Winston was a gift from his father to Will before his death. Will knew that his father just happened to stumble across the stray and posed it as a well thought gift, yet Will was still grateful anyways.

His father always knew of Will’s love for the four legged creatures.

Winston understood Will, or so he assumed. Winston stayed by his side in the dark nights he awoke sweaty and shaken from terrors that danced just on the tip of his mind, Winston trailed behind him while hunting, sniffing the air for prey, and always seemed to stare at Will in the most peculiar moments.

It was as if he was human. Always comprehending each meticulous word and every minor twitch of Will’s body.

He shook his head, carefully petting Winston behind the ears before removing his boots and throwing them beside the door haphazardly. His house was empty, and quiet, other than the

candles Will gave life too to light up his abode.

Will admired fire, the way it danced and played before one press of his fingers could snuff its life. Much like a human soul, he mused. Fire was beautiful, but for its purpose today, was to light Will's way.

Will had no stomach for food left after what had happened at the inn, and it was edging twilight by the time he returned home, no time to chop wood unless he'd like to be gobbled up by the woods wolves who prowled once the sun closed her eyes and the moon leapt into the sky.

He walked through his hallway, the shadows strewn across the walls moving as he walked as if spying every movement of his, hand hovering over the candle. He reached his room, and entered, listening to the click of Winston's nails trail behind him and ending as he settled by the bottom of Will's bed.

Will smiled again, and set the candle on his bedside table. Will removed his outer clothes, and sank into his mattress stuffed of hay and feathers, and thought for a moment before thinking back to Hannibal.

He leaned over and reached his hand under his bed, pulling out an engraved box. It was the thing that his father had left, it originally held the necklace Will wears, but also a few other objects.

Objects Will enjoyed leaving in the dark due to the dubious nature of them. Whether it was to forget the painful memories of his harsh father, or the pain of losing said harsh father, Will never wanted to discern it.

He trailed his fingers across the engravings, it was an old wooden box, and its edges were smoothed by the countless times of its use.

Used by whom before him? Perhaps his father, perhaps a merchant he bought it from, the story of the mysterious box's origin was foreign and never ending to Will.

Worn down by fingertip to fingertip, never to have its same shine as the day it was produced lovingly by hand carving. He pulled at the golden latch, flicking it open and pulling up the lid. The few items inside was another small box, this one engraved in runes his father never dared mention. It seemed like his favorite activity was to ignore any of Will's curious questions.

Whether it brought up heart aching memories or not, he deserved to know didn't he?

Inside the box was a fang, carefully set in a hand sewn red velvet blanket, wisps of gold embroidered upon the edges. The fang was pearly white, clean, and sharp enough to prick his finger by just a light touch. Will didn't know what animal, or thing, it came from.

A cougar, a wolf, it never matched. Human like in nature, yet still built for tearing. He plucked the fang from its place, twirling it between his fingers. It was oddly cold, and quite smooth to the touch.

He stared at it, before setting it back inside the smaller box and setting it back inside the original one. The box held another worn item, a pocket bible, the pages yellowed, and an unopened case of holy water.

His father was not the most religious man, but in these moments, he wondered what his father feared to leave such items. He was sure that if he opened the Bible, as he did beforehand, the nervous writings of pleas and prayers would not have disappeared from the Bible's pages.

Though, he must have been so afraid that his hand shook so terribly to produce such bad writing. Incomprehensible to even Will.

The last big item, one Will had naughtily played with when he was a kid, only when his father looked away, was a big blade. It was a knife, a better word for it was dagger.

The dagger was long, and the handle was engraved with roaring lions and creatures, presumably demons, being chased away by the light of God. It was pure silver, and hefty in his hand. The blade itself on the dagger was long, and curved at the end as if it was made to pierce and tear.

To rip and annihilate whatever it tore into.

He bit his lip, holding the dagger up and swinging it lazily from side to side. He wondered what his father used this for, what he killed with it. As the silver was not perfectly unused, there was a bit of obvious wear to it, but by what?

It was another question added to the endless list of things he'd never be able to ask his deceased papa.

Secrecy be damned.

He plopped the knife back into the box with a harsh 'thump' and shut the box, closing it back up again for another unknown amount of time and shoving it back under his bed. He looked at Winston, who eerily peeked at him from the side of the bed as usual.

These were the moments he wondered if Winston really was human, or really a dog.

The little creep.

He clicked his tongue and Winston stopped his spooky peeping and wandered over to Will's legs, tail thumping excitedly for being addressed.

"Good boy, aren't you?" Will said softly, and Winston's tongue merely lolled out the side as it always does. Will laid back onto his bed, patting the blanket and watched as Winston hopped up and laid by his side.

He warmed himself under the blanket before reaching his hand out, hesitating for far too long before snuffing out the candle's fire. He closed his eyes, laying his hand on Winston's fur calmly petting it. He drifted off to sleep, listening to the even breathing of Winston.

Winston huffed, lifting his head and nuzzling into Will's side.

……..

Nails dragged across his face. Sharp and taunting. Will was in a state of limbo, and now he was in his kitchen whence his eyes opened, darkness was everywhere engulfing any life form.

He turned, and a man stood in the poorly lit doorway, tall and grotesquely deformed. Its red eyes pierced the night, a predator hunting. Fear gripped Will's body as he thrashed his body in an attempt to move and began to run after freeing himself from his stupor.

In a blink he was now in the woods, the kitchen melting away. The creature was behind him, and he could feel its breath on his neck.

He looked behind himself and the creature's skin was black, the reflection of the moon on its oily skin starch in the moonlight.

He looked forward again and squeezed his eyes shut and everything was gone.

What was going on?

He was now in his dining room, his father sitting at the end of the table behind a feast of foods. Turkey, ham, salads, desserts galore. Will's head was pounding, and every blink the room morphed, subtly, but different. Focusing on his father, he was dead, glassy eyed, silent.

A fork was gripped in his left hand, unmoving. Will felt the pressure of hands lower onto his shoulders, which pressed him to sit down in the seat at the table, the food as he glanced at it looked alive. And then, he felt the pressure of the cold hands move to his neck, leaning his head to the side.

The hands gently tucked his curly hair behind his ear, feeling soft lips begin to tease his neck. Will let his eyes flutter closed, forgetting his deceased fathers corpse and feeling the icy foreign hands trail his chin before the lips kissed at the artery of his neck.

He was sure the stranger, which he cannot comprehend now, can feel his heartbeat thumping from the vein in his neck. The lips opened to the feeling of teeth, and fangs nip at his neck. Then, without a warning, the teeth tore into his neck, and Will jolted awake at the pinch.

His eyes flew open, eyes adjusting to the morning light that burned his vision.

He was on his porch.

Dammit, he was sleep walking again. He wearily placed his hand to the side of his neck where it ached like an unseen bruise, but felt no bite marks.

No marring, or even the bump of an itchy mosquito bite. He sighed in relief and looked down at his body. He was in his undergarments and just such, Winston was standing in the doorway watching, and Will sighed.

He hadn’t been sleep walking for quite awhile, he thought that it was over. That he’d found himself in such a pleasant state of calm, his brain could rest the desire for disaster. He

originally struggled with it after his fathers death, loneliness consuming him, and dealing with the nightmares also put extra strain on his body.

And now it was starting up all over again, an appalling cycle to deal with, he thought.

At least he could breath in the soothing morning air, which he could feel as the beginning stages of an icy nip that will come soon in the winter begin to show signs in the air. He stepped back into his house as Winston cleared the way, quickly walking into the kitchen as if he already knew.

Will was not a breakfast person, by God he was lucky to even have a joke of a meal on the table as a kid, but he knew due to not eating dinner, he should at least try to be a normal person with a normal eating habit. He simply took some of the dried meat he had hanging, and began to chew the jerky.

Maybe he'd go fishing later for more resources, after chopping wood of course. He has a bit of a bad habit of procrastinating.

He sat in tranquility for a while in his small kitchen, before standing and getting some more of the meat, and plopping it into the makeshift bowl Winston happily ate out of. The name 'Winston' was sloppily carved into the side of the bowl, which he'd done with his old hunting knife before it'd snapped in half.

Will wandered up the stairs, not wanting to warm water to bathe in, so he merely got a new set of clothes out of his drawer. If he was going to do physical work today anyways, there was no point of wasting water he could bathe in tonight afterwards when he was going to be exhausted and sweaty.

He quickly changed, tucking in his blouse into his trousers, hiding the necklace inside again. He avoided any mirror in his house entirely, afraid of who would stare back.

His mind wandered back to the cross Beverly gave him, and he walked back to find the discarded clothing from the night before and digging out the cross, placing it in his back pocket.

It was a kind gesture of her, so he'd at least carry it with him to honor it.

He was pulling on his jacket as he heard a frantic knock on the door, which he unhappily answered. He wasn't sure he wanted to know who'd be here at this time of the morning. As he opened it, he felt a soft smile lift his harsh expression.

It was Abigail Hobbs, Jacob Hobb's daughter, the village's butcher. He adored the young girl, even in their sparse moments of conversation. She was cunning and intelligent, and unlike many ladies of her age and time.

He admired her, almost as a daughter.

She smiled sadly at him, and brightened at Winston coming to Will's side.

“Hello Abigail, how might I help you?” Her face was strained tight, and she sighed through her sorrowful smile.

“Hello Will, Father Crawford has sent for you, but couldn’t come himself. He needs you in the town immediately, and I’d just run all the way down here,” she replied. She did seem tired, and Will politely had her move as he exited his house. He’d let Winston accompany him today. Perhaps it could even cheer up Abigail, as she seemed to love the pup as much as Will did.

“I see, and what has happened?” He asked her, as he began walking the pathway up to the village, she set herself by his side.

“A tragic loss, Will!” she said, “oh, I’m happy I didn’t see it myself, everyone who did said it was quite grueling. Father Crawford didn’t mean for anyone to see it either, he’d frantically been running trying to stop people from looking.”

She looked away distantly, and Will felt his gut roll. That man in the inn, could this have something to do with it? But what would a rich man have to do with some random villagers? It made no sense, and he quickly dismissed the thought. He glanced at the somber girl before starting, “Who was it, Abigail?” Abigail looked at him, frowning.

“Franklyn. Now I didn’t really like Franklyn, but the fellow didn’t deserve to lose his life, you know?” Will silently nodded, watching as Winston came to Abigail’s side and she ran her hand along the fur of his head. Well at least it wasn’t someone useful for the village.

He never liked Franklyn, he was an obsessive little twitchy man, who constantly switched who his new ideal ‘friend’ would be every week.

‘Friend’ was a kinder word for ‘obsession’ in Will’s opinion.

He’d once attempted to befriend Will, which ended horribly as Franklyn got attached easily by heart and was sensitive to the point of being annoying.

Too weak and malleable.

Though, he understood Abigail’s sentiment that he didn’t deserve to just… die. Annoying? Yes? Death worthy? Of course not. Maybe for the average person at least, since whatever he was dealing with, was most definitely not the average village folk.

The entrance of the town came into view, and he noticed how the crowd lingered in groups. People were afraid. And who wouldn’t be? A murder in a tight knit community was a large thing, as you didn’t know if your own neighbor could be the criminal.

Trust who you trust, deny who you deny, Will thought.

They walked through the center of the village, and Will could feel their prying eyes. He could feel their curiosity, as Will hardly came into the town on most days other than mass or to trade for a commodity.

He spotted Father Crawford, seemingly soothing his wife by brushing her stranded, black hairs behind her ear. She looked upset, facing the opposite way with a distant expression of sorrow. As they approached, she noticed them and turned, giving Will a polite wave and saw relief wash over Father Crawford's face when he spotted Will.

Abigail stood beside Will before he politely dismissed her to return to her father for safety reasons. Bella glanced at Father Crawford one last time before giving him a lovingly harsh look, and nodding at Will as she walked away presumably to return home, perhaps accompanying Abigail first.

Father Crawford patted Will on the arm as he began to lightly drag him by the bicep. “Will, thank you for coming, I am in desperate need right now,” Father Crawford said, bringing Will inside the Chapel.

They walked through the middle of the benches before reaching the confession booth, and Will could smell it.

Death.

Will glanced at Father Crawford, who wrung his large hands together.

“Will, please. I know you were blessed with a gift, can’t you please just.. try. Give us something to catch the demon who’s done this,” Father Crawford ‘pleaded’ but Will knew he had no say in this.

The decision was written in ink the moment he stepped in. He groaned lightly, turning from Father Crawford and placing his hand onto the handle of the confession booth.

“I need you to leave, Father Crawford.” Father Crawford nodded, eager at the lack of Will’s resistance. “Whatever you need to help us, thank you Will,” Father Crawford said before quietly excusing himself from the main area.

Will looked around to make sure he was completely alone, forcing his mental barriers to be tightened before gripping the confession stand handle, opening the door. He softly gasped at the sight.

The body, Franklyn, was gaunt. For always being rotund, and had quite the paunchy belly, his skin was pale, as if the very essence of his life was stolen away.

His eyes sunken in, yet he was comfortably sitting, as if he was merely taking a warm fall evening nap. His face merely portrayed hushed serenity, and no signs of fear were left behind.

No remains of a sweaty brow, no sign of chapped nervous bitten lips. There were no blood splatters, no strangle marks, or lacerations. Not a hair out of place, and his clothes eerily clean for the man's usual sweat stained wear.

There were two small holes in the side of his neck under where his unruly neck beard faded off towards his adams apple. The rims of the hole left a purple bruised, dry wound. But what

would puncture two holes? A needle? No, the hole is too large, what could it be?

Will stepped back from the gruesome sight, letting his eyes shut, breathing the stench of death in and letting the pendulums fall and begin to swing.

The night is dark tonight, and I've satisfied myself long enough with my recent visit. I am content, and excitement thrums through my veins, something big is coming and I cannot hold it together. I lurk the shadows, wandering up to the Chapel. I felt amused, slipping through the doors and noticed a large, short figure. A greasy little man, with ear length dark brown hair, whom I recognize who harassed me earlier perpetually because he wanted to be my 'friend', was sitting by the confession stand.

Though, this man foolishly accepted my invitation to meet at this hour. He was so desperate he cheered with joy earlier, but now the signs of anxiety were clear in the poor lighting.

How could one be so idiotic? So lost in self deprecation that the basic instinct of survival has been weaned off and thrown away by blindness. He wrung his hands through his hair, mumbling.

I creep behind him, he is not ideal, but my hunger that spikes inside me will only grow if I do not satiate it. I place my hands on his shoulders, and he spooks so badly he spins to look at me wildly.

Once he recognizes me as not a threat, but a potential friend, I see the admiration in his eyes. I yearn to make them glaze over.

I smile, and stare deeply into his eyes. Sleep, sleep and rest peacefully. Have no knowledge of who I am, and sleep. He falls back into the bench, and I pull his hefty body into my arms, setting him to slump inside the confession booth. I am careful that he does not drag against the floor. I bare my teeth, and lean and feed.

Hunger, All I feel is hunger. I have more self control than this, but the smell of human sweat, the lingering effect of fear makes my mouth water.

It's over bearing and I grip at his shoulders. Eat, eat, eat, eat!

This is my design.

Will's eyes flew open quickly. He's shaking, and perspiring through his clothes. He gasps for air as his canine teeth ache, what is wrong with him? Or should he say, what is wrong with this killer?

Something is not right, something is wrong. This is inhuman, grotesque in its nature. Yet so nurturing, as this thing allows its victims peace for their unruly demise. Humanity in disguise. He brought his hands together in a silent prayer, he was beginning to believe Father Crawford. This could not be normal.

By God, save this town, he prayed.

Chapter End Notes

Please leave me recommendations on how to fix the pacing of this story. :(

End Notes

Fun? Boring? Let me know if there's any recommendations you'd like to see in the future of this story, as everything is malleable.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!